



Technology Leadership in the Public Sector

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Exclusive Online Feature: Miami Nice

A new 311 system is about to expand how citizens interact with Miami-Dade County and CIO Judy Zito has taken charge.

By Tod Newcombe
May 2005

It's the end of the week and Judy Zito, Miami-Dade County's Chief Information Officer, has just returned from Austin, Texas where she was attending a users' group meeting for 311, the hot new call service that is transforming how local governments interact with citizens.

Before returning to her office in Miami, Zito stopped off in Fort Lauderdale to meet with other local government IT leaders from the area to discuss a host of issues concerning local government initiatives in the south Florida region. Zito is now finishing her second year as CIO, just the latest in a series of successful appointments she has held during a career in the public sector that stretches back 21 years. Right now, Miami-Dade's biggest priority is its new 311 service, which has been undergoing a soft launch since November of last year and is expected to go live officially later this summer.

But for now, Zito and her team of IT staff are running the 311 software, [CSR from Motorola](#), through extensive tests. The county has plans to hire a total of 80 call takers to handle the estimated 80,000 calls county residents are expected to make every month, and has created a knowledge base of 7000 topics to handle every conceivable query or complaint.

"Our goal is to answer 80 percent of the calls on the first contact, rather than to just transfer them to the various departments," said Zito.

To make the 311 service more effective, the county's extensive GIS layers will be tied to the information collected through the CSR. This feature will map the data collected by the software every time someone calls 311,



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Effectiveness Through E-Payments

Published by the National Electronic Commerce Coordinating Council, 2004

E-payments are the heartbeat of many e-government applications today. NECCC examined 19 e-payment applications in the public sector and highlighted the best practices in this report. Their combined cost savings, cost containment and revenue maximization is over \$186 million. Nearly half of the nominated projects were implemented in six months or less. Several states made their applications available to local governments. Over 60 percent of the applications employed credit cards, and over half of those charged some kind of convenience fee. In almost every case, the e-payment application was enterprise wide.

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Radio Frequency Identification: Little Devices Making Big Waves

Published by the Progressive Policy Institute, October 2004

This report examine the critiques of RFID by privacy advocates and argue that the call for RFID legislation is not yet warranted. Instead, the authors explain that

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[Intergovernmental Solutions Award Winners Announced at 2005 Management of Change Conference](#)

May 25 2005 2:01AM -- Federal, state, and local projects selected as winners for Award to Recognize Innovative Approach to Citizen Service

[American Cities in The Global Knowledge Economy: the Role of Broadband](#)

May 19 2005 2:16AM --

"Competing interests have intensified a national campaign to quash municipal wireless initiatives like Philadelphia's. Clearly our national communications policies are bankrupt."

[Colorado Statewide Internet Portal Authority Seeks Executive Director](#)

May 18 2005 2:00AM --

Applications accepted through June 10

[IBM Wants to Help Government Transform Itself](#)

May 16 2005 10:23AM --

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enabling the county to build accurate analytical reports that will help county executives and department heads to spot trends and patterns faster than has been possible.

According to Zito, the county expects to spend \$16 million to build the entire system, which will serve a population base of 2 million. The capital expenditure covers a separate call center facility, infrastructure, telephony and the hosting environment for the application. The 311 system currently runs from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, five days a week, with plans to gradually expand service to be available from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm. "But I don't believe we need to be open 24 x 7," Zito added.

Not surprisingly, the impact of 311 on the county is expected to be rather profound. What is surprising is how Zito, in her role as CIO, is moving to adapt to that change by anticipating how it will transform government at a number of levels. Already, it has changed Zito's role as CIO. "At first my office was just in charge of the technology operations regarding 311," she said. "But now I'm in charge of the entire operation, overseeing everything from staffing to the day-to-day operations."

Actually, the move to put Zito in charge of the entire hotline operation makes sense, given the fact that the county views 311 as an extension of e-government. Zito points out that adoption rates for e-government in Miami-Dade have been quite high, especially in the commercial sector where 90 percent of building firms use the city's online property and neighborhood appraisal tools extensively. Now, 311 will be tied directly into the city's Web presence, allowing residents to track the status of a complaint or request from their computer.

As the number of county residents who use 311 increases, so does the amount of data that government officials can analyze for service delivery and operational performance. However, some department heads are concerned about the data's impact on accountability. Departments are used to getting quarterly reports on how they are performing. With 311 that will no longer be the case. Results on performance will be available in near real-time, according to Zito, who is working with department heads to cushion the impact of this rising tide of information.

"Our role is to help our leaders see the information behind the data and how to draw the right conclusions from it," she explained. To soothe nervous department heads, Zito is using her communications skills to work with the officials so they understand what is in the information generated by the 311 analytical reports. "We tell them it may be bumpy at first but that the data they have today will support

with consumer notification and RFID tag deactivation options, most privacy concerns can be avoided. The authors call for government and industry cooperation to set and abide by detailed standards designed to protect consumers while still allowing the development of this promising technological application.

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Health Care: National Strategy Needed to Accelerate Implementation of Information Technology

Published by the General Accountability Office, July 2004

This report looks at the benefits that can come from having a national strategy for using IT in health care, including cost savings and improvements in the delivery and quality of health care. Currently, health care is an information intensive industry that is highly fragmented and inefficient. The report calls for standards for greater interoperability and provides examples of how government can play a role in helping improve the nation's health care system.

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How Americans Get in Touch with Government

Published by Pew & American Life Project, May 2004

In July 2003 The Pew & American Life Project surveyed 2,925 Americans on how they contact government, what for, by what means, and with what outcomes. The data show how the Internet is used by citizens in their dealings with government. Much of the analysis focuses on a group called Government Patrons - people who contacted government in the past year for reasons not related to the simple act of mailing in tax returns.

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them when they go into next year's budget meeting and they can use the same data to show why they were able to perform some services and not some others because resources or equipment weren't available"

Zito is also highlighting the early adopters of the system so that other department heads can see how 311 has been a success, not a threat, for them. "There's a lot of relationship management involved with this launch," she explained. "We don't want to alienate someone with this new technology."

Tod Newcombe

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